

Adolf Hitler

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Adolf Hitler (April 20, 1889 – April 30, 1945) was Chancellor of Germany from 1933, and " Führer" (leader) of Germany from 1934 until his death. He was leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or NSDAP), better known as the Nazi Party.

Hitler gained power in a Germany facing crisis after World War I. Using propaganda and charismatic oratory, he was able to appeal to the economic need of the lower and middle classes, while sounding resonant chords of nationalism, anti-Semitism and anti-communism. With the establishment of a restructured economy, a rearmed military, and a totalitarian fascist dictatorship, Hitler pursued an aggressive foreign policy with the intention of expanding German *Lebensraum* ("living space"), which triggered World War II when Germany invaded Poland. At the height of its power, Nazi Germany occupied most of Europe, but it and the Axis Powers were eventually defeated by the Allies. By then, Hitler's racial policies had culminated in a genocide of approximately eleven million people, including about six million Jews, in what is now known as the Holocaust.

In the final days of the war, Hitler committed suicide in his underground bunker in Berlin with his newlywed wife, Eva Braun.

Early years

Childhood and heritage

Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889 at Braunau am Inn, Austria, a small town in Upper Austria, on the border with Germany. He was the third son and the fourth of six children of Alois Hitler (born Schicklgruber) (1837–1903), a minor customs official, and Klara Pölzl (1860–1907), his second cousin, and third wife. Because of the close kinship of the two, a papal dispensation had to be obtained before the marriage could take place. Of Alois and Klara's six children, only Adolf and his younger sister Paula reached adulthood. Alois Hitler also had a son, Alois Jr., and a daughter, Angela, by his second wife.

Alois was born illegitimate and for the first thirty-nine years of his life bore his mother's name, Schicklgruber. In 1876, Alois began using the name of his stepfather, Johann Georg Hiedler, after visiting a priest responsible for birth registries and declaring that Georg was his father (Alois gave the impression that Georg was still alive but he was long dead). The name was variously spelled Hiedler, Huetler, Huettler and Hitler and probably changed to "Hitler" by a clerk. About the origin of the name there are two theories:

1. From German *Hittler* and similar, "one who lives in a hut", "shepherd".
2. From Slavic *Hidlar* and *Hidlarcek*.

Later, Adolf Hitler was accused by his political enemies of not rightfully being a Hitler, but a Schicklgruber. This was also exploited in Allied propaganda during World War II when pamphlets bearing the phrase "Heil Schicklgruber" were airdropped over German cities. Adolf was legally born a Hitler, however, and was also closely related to Hiedler through his maternal grandmother, Johanna Hiedler.

Hitler's given name, "Adolf", comes from the Old High German for "noble wolf" ("Adel"="nobility" + "wolf"). Hence, not surprisingly, one of Hitler's self-given nicknames was *Wolf* or *Herr Wolf* — he began using this nickname in the early 1920s and was addressed by it only by intimates (as "Uncle Wolf" by the Wagners) up until the fall of the Third Reich. By his closest family and relatives, Hitler was known simply as "Adi". The names of his various headquarters scattered throughout continental Europe (*Wolfsschanze* in East Prussia, *Wolfsschlucht* in France, *Werwolf* in Ukraine, etc.) seem to reflect this.

As a boy, Hitler was whipped almost daily by his father. Years later he told his secretary, "I then resolved never again to cry when my father whipped me. A few days later I had the opportunity of putting my will to the test. My mother, frightened, took refuge in the front of the door. As for me, I counted silently the blows of the stick which lashed my rear end."

Hitler was not sure who his paternal grandfather was, but it was probably either Johann Georg Hiedler or his brother Johann Nepomuk Hiedler. There have been rumours that Hitler was one-quarter Jewish and that his paternal grandmother, Maria Schicklgruber, had become pregnant after working as a servant in a Jewish household in Graz. During the 1920s, the implications of these rumours along with his known family history were politically explosive, especially for the proponent of a racist ideology. Opponents tried to prove that Hitler, the leader of the anti-Semitic Nazi Party, had Jewish or Czech ancestors. Although these rumours were never confirmed, for Hitler they were reason enough to conceal his origins. Soviet propaganda insisted Hitler was a Jew, though more modern research tends to diminish the probability that he had Jewish ancestors. According to Robert G. L. Waite in *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler*, Hitler

Adolf Hitler



Chancellor of Germany *Reichskanzler*

In office

30 January 1933 – 30 April 1945

Preceded by Kurt von Schleicher

Succeeded by Joseph Goebbels

Head of State *Führer und Reichskanzler*

In office

2 August 1934 – April 30, 1945

Preceded by Paul von Hindenburg
(*as President*)

Succeeded by Karl Dönitz
(*as President*)

Born	April 20, 1889 <div>Braunau am Inn, Austria</div>
Died	April 30, 1945 <div>Berlin, Germany</div>
Political party	National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP)
Spouse	Eva Braun (<i>married on 29 April 1945</i>)



Adolf Hitler as an infant.

made it illegal for German women to work in Jewish households, and after the "Anschluss" (annexation) of Austria, Hitler had his father's hometown obliterated by turning it into an artillery practice area. Hitler seemed to fear that he was Jewish, and as Waite points out, this fact is more important than whether he actually was.

Because of Alois Hitler's profession, his family moved frequently, from Braunau to Passau, Lambach, Leonding, and Linz. As a young child, Hitler was reportedly a good student at the various elementary schools he attended; however, in sixth grade (1900–1), his first year of high school (*Realschule*) in Linz, he failed completely and had to repeat the grade. His teachers reported that he had "no desire to work."

Hitler later explained this educational slump as a kind of rebellion against his father Alois, who wanted the boy to follow him in a career as a customs official, although Adolf wanted to become a painter. This explanation is further supported by Hitler's later description of himself as a misunderstood artist. However, after Alois died on January 3, 1903, when Adolf was 13, Hitler's schoolwork did not improve. At the age of 16, Hitler left school with no qualifications.

Early adulthood in Vienna and Munich

From 1905 onward, Hitler was able to live the life of a Bohemian on a fatherless child's pension and support from his mother. He was rejected twice by the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (1907 – 1908) due to "unfitness for painting", and was told his abilities lay rather in the field of architecture. His own memoirs reflect a fascination with the subject:

"The purpose of my trip was to study the picture gallery in the Court Museum, but I had eyes for scarcely anything but the Museum itself. From morning until late at night, I ran from one object of interest to another, but it was always the buildings which held my primary interest." (Mein Kampf, Chapter II, paragraph 3).

Following the school rector's recommendation, he too became convinced this was the path to pursue, yet he lacked the proper academic preparation for architecture school:

"In a few days I myself knew that I should some day become an architect. To be sure, it was an incredibly hard road; for the studies I had neglected out of spite at the Realschule were sorely needed. One could not attend the Academy's architectural school without having attended the building school at the Technic, and the latter required a high-school degree. I had none of all this. The fulfillment of my artistic dream seemed physically impossible." (Mein Kampf, Chapter II, paragraph 5 & 6).

On December 21, 1907, his mother Klara died a painful death from breast cancer at the age of 47. Hitler gave his share of the orphans' benefits to his younger sister Paula, but when he was 21 he inherited some money from an aunt. He worked as a struggling painter in Vienna, copying scenes from postcards and selling his paintings to merchants and tourists (there is evidence he produced over 2000 paintings and drawings before World War I). Several biographers have noted that a Jewish resident of the house named Hanisch helped him sell his postcards.

After the second refusal from the Academy of Arts, Hitler gradually ran out of money. By 1909, he sought refuge in a homeless shelter, and by the beginning of 1910 had settled permanently into a house for poor working men.

Hitler first became an active anti-Semite in Vienna, which had a large Jewish community, including many Orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe and where traditional religious prejudice mixed with recent racist theories. Hitler was influenced over time by the writings of the race ideologist and anti-Semite Lanz von Liebenfels and polemics from politicians such as Karl Lueger, founder of the Christian Social Party and mayor of Vienna, one of the most outrageous demagogues in history, and Georg Ritter von Schönerer, leader of the pan-Germanic *Away from Rome!* movement. He later wrote in his book *Mein Kampf* that his transition from opposing anti-Semitism on religious grounds to supporting it on racial grounds came from having seen an Orthodox Jew:

"There were very few Jews in Linz. In the course of centuries the Jews who lived there had become Europeanized in external appearance and were so much like other human beings that I even looked upon them as Germans. The reason why I did not then perceive the absurdity of such an illusion was that the only external mark which I recognized as distinguishing them from us was the practice of their strange religion. As I thought that they were persecuted on account of their faith my aversion to hearing remarks against them grew almost into a feeling of abhorrence. I did not in the least suspect that there could be such a thing as a systematic anti-Semitism."

Once, when passing through the inner City, I suddenly encountered a phenomenon in a long caftan and wearing black side-locks. My first thought was: Is this a Jew? They certainly did not have this appearance in Linz. I carefully watched the man stealthily and cautiously but the longer I gazed at the strange countenance and examined it feature by feature, the more the question shaped itself in my brain: Is this a German?" (Mein Kampf, vol. 1, chap. 2: "Years of study and suffering in Vienna")

Hitler began to claim the Jews were natural enemies of what he called the Aryan race. He held them responsible for Austria's crisis. He also identified certain forms of Socialism and especially Bolshevism, which had many Jews among its leaders, as Jewish movements, merging his anti-Semitism with anti-Marxism. Blaming Germany's military defeat on the 1917 Revolutions, he considered Jews the culprit of Imperial Germany's military defeat and subsequent economic problems as well.

Generalising from tumultuous scenes in the parliament of the multi-national Austria Monarchy, he developed a firm belief in the inferiority of the democratic parliamentary system, which formed the basis of his political views. However, according to August Kubizek, his close friend and roommate at the time, he was more interested in the operas of Richard Wagner than in politics.



A watercolour by Adolf Hitler depicting Laon, France.



A landscape painted by Adolf Hitler.

Hitler received the final part of his father's estate in May 1913 and moved to Munich. He later wrote in *Mein Kampf* that he had always longed to live in a "real" German city. In Munich, he became more interested in architecture and the writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Moving to Munich also helped him escape military service in Austria for a time, but the Austrian army later arrested him. After a physical exam (during which his height was measured at 173 cm, or 5 ft 8 in) and a contrite plea, he was deemed unfit for service and allowed to return to Munich. However, when Germany entered World War I in August 1914, he immediately petitioned King Ludwig III of Bavaria for permission to serve in a Bavarian regiment, this request was granted, and Adolf Hitler enlisted in the Bavarian army.

World War I

Hitler saw active service in France and Belgium as a messenger for the regimental headquarters of the 16th Bavarian Reserve Regiment (also called *Regiment List* after its first commander), which exposed him to enemy fire. Unlike his fellow soldiers, Hitler reportedly never complained about the food or hard conditions, preferring to talk about art or history. He also drew some cartoons and instructional drawings for the army newspaper. His behaviour as a soldier was considered somewhat sloppy, but his regular duties required taking dispatches to and from fighting areas and he was twice decorated for his performance of these duties. He received the Iron Cross, Second Class in December 1914 and the Iron Cross, First Class in August 1918, an honour rarely given to a Gefreiter. However, because of the perception of "a lack of leadership skills" on the part of some of the regimental staff, as well as (according to Kershaw) Hitler's unwillingness to leave regimental headquarters (which would have been likely in event of promotion), he was never promoted to Unteroffizier. Other historians, however, say that the reason he was not promoted is that he did not have German citizenship. His duty station at regimental headquarters, while often dangerous, gave Hitler time to pursue his artwork. During October 1916 in northern France, Hitler was wounded in the leg, but returned to the front in March 1917. He received the Wound Badge later that year, as his injury was the direct result of hostile fire. Sebastian Haffner, referring to Hitler's experience at the front, suggests he did have at least some understanding of the military.

On October 15, 1918, shortly before the end of the war, Hitler was admitted to a field hospital, temporarily blinded by a poison gas attack. The English psychologist David Lewis and Bernhard Horstmann indicate the blindness may have been the result of a conversion disorder (then known as hysteria). Hitler later said it was during this experience that he became convinced the purpose of his life was to "save Germany". Some scholars, notably Lucy Dawidowicz, argue that an intention to mass murder Europe's Jews was fully formed in Hitler's mind at this time, though he probably hadn't thought through how it could be done.

Two passages in *Mein Kampf* mention the use of *poison gas*:

At the beginning of the Great War, or even during the War, if twelve or fifteen thousand of these Jews who were corrupting the nation had been forced to submit to poison-gas . . . then the millions of sacrifices made at the front would not have been in vain. (Volume 2, Chapter 15 "The Right to Self-Defence").

These tactics are based on an accurate estimation of human weakness and must lead to success, with almost mathematical certainty, unless the other side also learns how to fight poison gas with poison gas. The weaker natures must be told that here it is a case of to be or not to be. (Volume 1, Chapter 2 "Years of Study and Suffering in Vienna")

Hitler had long admired Germany, and during the war he had become a passionate German patriot, although he did not become a German citizen until 1932. He was shocked by Germany's capitulation in November 1918 even while the German army still held enemy territory. Like many other German nationalists, Hitler believed in the *Dolchstoßlegende* ("dagger-stab legend") which claimed that the army, "undefeated in the field", had been "stabbed in the back" by civilian leaders and Marxists back on the home front. These politicians were later dubbed the *November Criminals*.

The Treaty of Versailles deprived Germany of various territories, demilitarized the Rhineland and imposed other economically damaging sanctions. The treaty also declared Germany the culprit for all the horrors of the Great War, as a basis for later imposing not yet specified reparations on Germany (the amount was repeatedly revised under the Dawes Plan, Young Plan and the Hoover Moratorium). Germans, however, perceived the treaty and especially the paragraph on the German guilt as a humiliation, not least as it was damaging in the extreme to their pride. For example, there was nearly a full demilitarisation of the armed forces, allowing Germany only 6 battleships, no submarines, no air force, an army of 100,000 without conscription and no armoured vehicles. The treaty was an important factor in both the social and political conditions encountered by Hitler and his National Socialist Party as they sought power. Hitler and his party used the signing of the treaty by the "November Criminals" as a reason to build up Germany so that it could never happen again. He also used the 'November Criminals' as scapegoats, although at the Paris peace conference, these politicians had very little choice in the matter.

The early years of the Nazi Party

Hitler's entry into politics

After World War I, Hitler remained in the army and returned to Munich, where he - in contrast to his later declarations - participated in the funeral march for the murdered Bavarian prime minister Kurt Eisner. After the suppression of the Munich Soviet Republic, took part in "national thinking" courses organized by the *Education and Propaganda Department* (Dept Ib/P) of the Bavarian *Reichswehr* Group, Headquarters 4 under Captain Karl Mayr. A key purpose of this group was to create a scapegoat for the outbreak of the war and Germany's defeat. The scapegoats were found in "international Jewry", communists, and politicians across the party spectrum, especially the parties of the Weimar Coalition, who were deemed "November Criminals".

In July 1919, Hitler was appointed a *Verbindungsmann* (police spy) of an *Aufklärungskommando* (Intelligence Commando) of the Reichswehr, for the purpose of influencing other soldiers toward similar ideas and was assigned to infiltrate a small party, the German Workers' Party (DAP), which was thought of to be a possibly socialist party (See: *Adolf Hitler's inspection of the German Workers' Party*). During his inspection of the party, Hitler was impressed with Drexler's anti-Semitic, nationalist, anti-capitalist and anti-Marxist ideas, which favoured a strong active government, a "non-Jewish" version of socialism and mutual solidarity of all members of society.

Here Hitler also met Dietrich Eckart, one of the early founders of the party and member of the occult Thule Society. Eckart became Hitler's mentor, exchanging ideas with him, teaching him how to dress and speak, and introducing him to a wide range of people. Hitler in return thanked Eckart by paying tribute to him in the second volume of *Mein Kampf*.

Hitler was discharged from the army in March 1920 and with his former superiors' continued encouragement began participating full time in the party's activities. By early 1921, Adolf Hitler was becoming highly effective at speaking in front of even larger crowds. In February, Hitler spoke before a crowd of nearly six thousand in Munich. To publicize the meeting, he sent out two truckloads of Party supporters to drive around with swastikas, cause a commotion and throw out leaflets, their first use of this tactic. Hitler gained notoriety outside of the Party for his rowdy, polemic speeches against the Treaty of Versailles, rival politicians (including monarchists, nationalists and other non-internationalist socialists) and especially against Marxists and Jews.

The DAP was centered in Munich which had become a hotbed of German nationalists who included Army officers determined to crush Marxism and undermine or even overthrow the young German republic. Gradually they noticed Adolf Hitler and his growing movement as a vehicle to hitch themselves to. Hitler traveled to Berlin to visit nationalist groups during the summer of 1921 and in his absence there was an unexpected revolt among the DAP leadership in Munich.

The Party was run by an executive committee whose original members considered Hitler to be overbearing and even dictatorial. To weaken Hitler's position they formed an alliance with a group of socialists from Augsburg. Hitler rushed back to Munich and countered them by tendering his resignation from the Party on July 11, 1921. When they realized the loss of Hitler would effectively mean the end of the Party, he seized the moment and announced he would return on the condition that he was made chairman and given dictatorial powers. Infuriated committee members (including founder Anton Drexler) held out at first. Meanwhile an anonymous pamphlet appeared entitled *Adolf Hitler: Is he a traitor?*, attacking Hitler's lust for power and criticizing the violence-prone men around him. Hitler responded to its publication in a Munich newspaper by suing for libel and later won a small settlement.

The executive committee of the DAP eventually backed down and Hitler's demands were put to a vote of party members. Hitler received 543 votes for and only one against. At the next gathering on July 29, 1921, Adolf Hitler was introduced as Führer of the National Socialist Party, marking the first time this title was publicly used. Hitler changed the name of the party to the National Socialist German Workers Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or NSDAP).

Hitler's beer hall oratory, attacking Jews, social democrats, liberals, reactionary monarchists, capitalists and communists, began attracting adherents. Early followers included Rudolf Hess, the former air force pilot Hermann Göring, and the army captain Ernst Röhm, who became head of the Nazis' paramilitary organization, the SA, which protected meetings and attacked political opponents. Hitler also assimilated independent groups, such as the Nuremberg-based *Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft*, led by Julius Streicher, who now became Gauleiter of Franconia. Hitler also attracted the attention of local business interests, was accepted into influential circles of Munich society and became associated with wartime General Erich Ludendorff during this time.

The Beer Hall Putsch

Encouraged by this early support, Hitler decided to use Ludendorff as a front in an attempt to seize power later known as the *Beer Hall Putsch* (and sometimes as the *Hitler Putsch* or *Munich Putsch*). The Nazi Party had copied the Italian Fascists in appearance and also had adopted some programmatical points and now, in the turbulent year 1923, Hitler wanted to emulate Mussolini's "March on Rome" by staging his own "Campaign in Berlin". Hitler and Ludendorff obtained the clandestine support of Gustav von Kahr, Bavaria's de facto ruler along with leading figures in the Reichswehr and the police. As political posters show, Ludendorff, Hitler and the heads of the Bavarian police and military planned on forming a new government.

However on November 8, 1923 Kahr and the military withdrew their support during a meeting in the Bürgerbräukeller, a large beer hall outside of Munich. A surprised Hitler had them arrested and proceeded with the coup. Unknown to him, Kahr and the other detainees had been released on Ludendorff's orders after he obtained their word not to interfere. That night they prepared resistance measures against the coup and in the morning, when Hitler and his followers marched from the beer hall to the Bavarian War Ministry to overthrow the Bavarian government as a start to their "March on Berlin", the army quickly dispersed them (Ludendorff was wounded and a few other Nazis were killed).

Hitler fled to the home of friends and contemplated suicide. He was soon arrested for high treason and appointed Alfred Rosenberg as temporary leader of the party but found himself in an environment somewhat receptive to his beliefs. During Hitler's trial, sympathetic magistrates allowed Hitler to turn his debacle into a propaganda stunt. He was given almost unlimited amounts of time to present his arguments to the court, and his popularity soared when he voiced basic nationalistic sentiments shared by some of the public. On April 1, 1924 Hitler was sentenced to five years' imprisonment at Landsberg prison for the crime of conspiracy to commit treason. Hitler received favoured treatment from the guards and



A copy of Adolf Hitler's forged DAP membership card. His actual membership number was 555 (the 55th member of the party - the 500 was added to make the group appear larger) but later the number was reduced to create the impression that Hitler was one of the founding members (Ian Kershaw *Hubris*). Hitler had wanted to create his own party, but was ordered by his superiors in the Reichswehr to infiltrate an existing one instead.

had much fan mail from admirers. Hitler was released on December 20, 1924 after the authorities decided that he was not a danger to the public. Including remand, he had served just over one year of his five-year sentence.

Mein Kampf

While at Landsberg he dictated his political book *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) to his deputy Rudolf Hess. The book, dedicated to Thule Society member Dietrich Eckart, was both an autobiography and an exposition of his political ideology. It was published in two volumes in 1925 and 1926 respectively, selling about 240,000 copies between 1925 and 1934 alone. By the end of the war, about 10 million copies had been sold or distributed (every newly-wed couple, as well as front soldiers, received free copies).

Hitler spent years dodging taxes on the royalties of his book, and had accumulated a tax debt of about 405,500 Reichsmarks (6m euros in today's money) by the time he became chancellor (at which time his debt was waived).

The rebuilding of the party

At the time of Hitler's release, the political situation in Germany had calmed down, and the economy had improved, which hampered Hitler's opportunities for agitation. Though the *Hitler Putsch* had given Hitler some national prominence, his party's mainstay was still Munich.

As Hitler was still banned from public speeches, he appointed Gregor Strasser, who in 1924 had been elected to the Reichstag, as *Reichsorganisationsleiter*, authorizing him to organise the party in northern Germany. Gregor, joined by his younger brother Otto and Joseph Goebbels, steered an increasingly independent course, emphasizing the socialist element in the party's programme. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Gauleiter Nord-West* became an internal opposition, threatening Hitler's authority, but this faction was defeated at the Bamberg Conference (1926), during which Goebbels joined Hitler.

After this encounter, Hitler centralized the party even more and asserted the *Führerprinzip* as the basic principle of party organization. Leaders were not elected by their group but were rather appointed by their superior and were answerable to them while demanding unquestioning obedience from their inferiors. Consistent with Hitler's disdain for democracy, all power and authority devolved from the top down.

A key element of Hitler's appeal was his ability to convey a sense of offended national pride caused by the Treaty of Versailles imposed on the defeated German Empire by the Western Allies. Germany had lost economically important territory in Europe along with its colonies and in admitting to sole responsibility for the war had agreed to pay a huge reparations bill totaling 132 billion marks. Most Germans bitterly resented these terms but early Nazi attempts to gain support by blaming these humiliations on "international Jewry" were not particularly successful with the electorate. The party learned quickly and soon a more subtle propaganda emerged, combining anti-Semitism with an attack on the failures of the "Weimar system" and the parties supporting it.

Having failed in overthrowing the Republic by a coup, Hitler now pursued the "strategy of legality": this meant formally adhering to the rules of the Weimar Republic until he had legally gained power and then transforming liberal democracy into a Nazi dictatorship. Some party members, especially in the paramilitary SA, opposed this strategy and Ernst Röhm ridiculed Hitler as "Adolphe Legalité".

The road to power

The Brüning administration

The political turning point for Hitler came when the Great Depression hit Germany in 1930. The Weimar Republic had never been firmly rooted and was openly opposed by right-wing conservatives (including monarchists), Communists and the Nazis. As the parties loyal to the democratic, parliamentary republic found themselves unable to agree on counter-measures, their Grand Coalition broke up and was replaced by a minority cabinet. The new Chancellor Heinrich Brüning of the Roman Catholic Centre Party, lacking a majority in parliament, had to implement his measures through the President's emergency decrees. Tolerated by the majority of parties, the exception soon became the rule and paved the way for authoritarian forms of government.

The Reichstag's initial opposition to Brüning's measures led to premature elections in September 1930. The republican parties lost their majority and their ability to resume the Grand Coalition, while the Nazis suddenly rose from relative obscurity to win 18.3% of the vote along with 107 seats in the Reichstag, becoming the second largest party in Germany.

Brüning's measure of budget consolidation and financial austerity brought little economic improvement and was extremely unpopular. Under these circumstances, Hitler appealed to the bulk of German farmers, war veterans and the middle-class who had been hard-hit by both the inflation of the 1920s and the unemployment of the Depression. Hitler received little response from the urban working classes and traditionally Catholic regions.

Meanwhile, on September 18, 1931, Hitler's niece Geli Raubal was found dead in her bedroom in his Munich apartment (his half-sister Angela and her daughter Geli had been with him in Munich since 1929), an apparent suicide. Geli was 19 years younger than he was and had used his gun, drawing rumours of a relationship between the two. The event is viewed as having caused lasting turmoil for him.

In 1932, Hitler intended to run against the aging President Paul von Hindenburg in the scheduled presidential elections. Though Hitler had left Austria in 1913, he still had not acquired German citizenship and hence could not run for public office. In February, however, the state government of Brunswick, in which the Nazi Party participated, appointed Hitler to some minor administrative post and also gave him citizenship. The new German citizen ran against Hindenburg, who was supported by a broad range of reactionary nationalist, monarchist, Catholic, Republican and even social democratic parties, and against the Communist presidential candidate. His campaign was called "Hitler über Deutschland" (Hitler over Germany). The name had a double meaning.

Besides an obvious reference to Hitler's dictatorial intentions, it also referred to the fact that Hitler was campaigning by aircraft. This was a brand new political tactic that allowed Hitler to speak in two cities in one day, which was practically unheard of at the time. Hitler came in second on both rounds, attaining more than 35% of the vote during the second one in April. Although he lost to Hindenburg, the election established Hitler as a realistic and fresh alternative in German politics.

The cabinets of Papen and Schleicher

President Hindenburg, influenced by the Camarilla, became increasingly estranged from Brüning and pushed his Chancellor to move the government in a decidedly authoritarian and right-wing direction. This culminated, in May 1932, with the resignation of the Brüning cabinet.

Hindenburg appointed the nobleman Franz von Papen as chancellor, heading a "Cabinet of Barons". Papen was bent on authoritarian rule and, since in the Reichstag only the conservative DNVP supported his administration, he immediately called for new elections in July. In these elections, the Nazis achieved their biggest success yet and won 230 seats.

The Nazis had become the largest party in the Reichstag without which no stable government could be formed. Papen tried to convince Hitler to become Vice-Chancellor and enter a new government with a parliamentary basis. Hitler however rejected this offer and put further pressure on Papen by entertaining parallel negotiations with the Centre Party, Papen's former party, which was bent on bringing down the renegade Papen. In both negotiations, Hitler demanded that he, as leader of the strongest party, must be Chancellor, but President Hindenburg consistently refused to appoint the "Bohemian private" to the Chancellorship.

After a vote of no-confidence in the Papen government, supported by 84% of the deputies, the new Reichstag was dissolved and new elections were called in November. This time, the Nazis lost some votes but still remained the largest party in the Reichstag.

After Papen failed to secure a majority, he proposed to dissolve the parliament again along with an indefinite postponement of elections. Hindenburg at first accepted this, but after General Kurt von Schleicher and the military withdrew their support, Hindenburg instead dismissed Papen and appointed Schleicher, who promised he could secure a majority government by negotiations with both the Social Democrats, the trade unions, and dissidents from the Nazi party under Gregor Strasser. In January 1933, however, Schleicher had to admit failure in these efforts and asked Hindenburg for emergency powers along with the same postponement of elections that he had opposed earlier, to which the President reacted by dismissing Schleicher.

Hitler's appointment as Chancellor

Meanwhile Papen, resentful because of his dismissal, tried to get his revenge on Schleicher by working toward the General's downfall, through forming an intrigue with the camarilla and Alfred Hugenberg, media mogul and chairman of the DNVP. Also involved were Hjalmar Schacht, Fritz Thyssen and other leading German businessmen. They financially supported the Nazi Party, which had been brought to the brink of bankruptcy by the cost of heavy campaigning. The businessmen also wrote letters to Hindenburg, urging him to appoint Hitler as leader of a government "independent from parliamentary parties" which could turn into a movement that would "enrapture millions of people."

Finally, the President reluctantly agreed to appoint Hitler Chancellor of a coalition government formed by the NSDAP and DNVP. Hitler and two other Nazi ministers (Frick, Göring) were to be contained by a framework of conservative cabinet ministers, most notably by Papen as Vice-Chancellor and by Hugenberg as Minister of Economics. Papen wanted to use Hitler as a figure-head, but the Nazis had gained key positions, most notably the Ministry of the Interior. On the morning of January 30, 1933, in Hindenburg's office, Adolf Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor during what some observers later described as a brief and simple ceremony.

Reichstag Fire and the March elections

Having become Chancellor, Hitler foiled all attempts to gain a majority in parliament and on that basis convinced President Hindenburg to dissolve the Reichstag again. Elections were scheduled for early March, but on February 27, 1933, the Reichstag building was set on fire. Since a Dutch independent communist was found in the building, the fire was blamed on a Communist plot to which the government reacted with the Reichstag Fire Decree of February 28, which suspended basic rights, including *habeas corpus*. Under the provisions of this decree, the German Communist Party and other groups were suppressed, and Communist functionaries and deputies were arrested, put to flight, or murdered. In the same month Hitler banned pornography, homosexual bars and bath-houses and groups which promoted "gay rights". Campaigning continued, with the Nazis making use of paramilitary violence, anti-Communist hysteria, and the government's resources for propaganda. On election day, March 6, the NSDAP increased its result to 43.9% of the vote, remaining the largest party, but its victory was marred by its failure to secure an absolute majority. Hitler had to maintain his coalition with the DNVP, as the coalition had a slim majority.

The "Day of Potsdam" and the Enabling Act

On 21 March, the new Reichstag was constituted itself with an impressive opening ceremony held at Potsdam's garrison church. This "Day of Potsdam" was staged to demonstrate reconciliation and union between the revolutionary Nazi movement and "Old Prussia" with its elites and virtues. Hitler himself appeared, not in Nazi uniform, but in a tail coat, and humbly greeted the aged President Hindenburg.

Because of the Nazis' failure to obtain a majority on their own, Hitler's government confronted the newly elected Reichstag with the Enabling Act that would have vested the cabinet with legislative powers for a period of four years. Though such a bill was not unprecedented, this act was different since it allowed for deviations from the constitution. As the bill required a two-thirds majority in order to pass, the government needed the support of other parties. The position of the Catholic Centre Party, at this point the third largest party in the Reichstag, turned out to be decisive: under the leadership of Ludwig Kaas, the party decided to vote for the Enabling Act. It did so in return for the government's oral guarantees regarding the Church's liberty, the concordats signed by German states and the continued existence of the Centre Party itself.

On 23 March, the Reichstag assembled in a replacement building under extremely turbulent circumstances. Some SA men served as guards within while large groups outside the building shouted slogans and threats toward the arriving deputies. Kaas announced that the Centre would support the bill amid "concerns put aside.", while Social Democrat Otto Wels denounced the Act in his speech. At the end of the day, all parties except the Social Democrats voted in favour of the bill. The Enabling Act was dutifully renewed by the Reichstag every four years, even through World War II.

Removal of remaining limits

With this combination of legislative and executive power, Hitler's government further suppressed the remaining political opposition. The KPD and the SPD were banned, while all other political parties dissolved themselves. Labour unions were merged with employers' federations into an organisation under Nazi control and the autonomy of German state governments was abolished.

Hitler also used the SA paramilitary to push Hugenberg into resigning and proceeded to politically isolate Vice Chancellor Papen. As the SA's demands for political and military power caused much anxiety among the populace in general and especially among the military, Hitler used allegations of a plot by the SA leader Ernst Röhm to purge the paramilitary force's leadership during the Night of the Long Knives. Opponents unconnected with the SA were also murdered, notably Gregor Strasser and former Chancellor Kurt von Schleicher.

Soon after, president Paul von Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934. Rather than holding new presidential elections, Hitler's cabinet passed a law proclaiming the presidency dormant and transferred the role and powers of the head of state to Hitler as *Führer und Reichskanzler* (leader and chancellor). Thereby Hitler also became supreme commander of the military, which then swore their military oath not to the state or the constitution but to Hitler personally. In a mid-August plebiscite, these acts found the approval of 90% of the electorate. Combining the highest offices in state, military and party in his hand, Hitler had attained supreme rule that could no longer be legally challenged.

The Third Reich

Having secured supreme political power, Hitler went on to gain their support by persuading most Germans he was their saviour from the Depression, the Communists, the Versailles Treaty, and the Jews along with other "undesirable" minorities.

Economics and culture

Hitler oversaw one of the greatest expansions of industrial production and civil improvement Germany had ever seen, mostly based on debt flotation and expansion of the military. Nazi policies toward women strongly encouraged them to stay at home to bear children and keep house. In a September 1934 speech to the National Socialist Women's Organization, Adolf Hitler argued that for the German woman her "world is her husband, her family, her children, and her home," a policy which was reinforced by the bestowing of the Cross of Honour of the German Mother on women bearing four or more babies. The unemployment rate was cut substantially, mostly through arms production and sending women home so that men could take their jobs. Given this, claims that the German economy achieved near full employment are at least partly artifacts of propaganda from the era. Much of the financing for Hitler's reconstruction and rearmament came from currency manipulation by Hjalmar Schacht, including the clouded credits through the Mefo bills. The negative effects of this inflation were offset in later years by the acquisition of foreign gold from the treasuries of conquered nations.

Hitler also oversaw one of the largest infrastructure improvement campaigns in German history, with the construction of dozens of dams, autobahns, railroads and other civil works. Hitler's policies emphasised the importance of family life: men were the "breadwinners", while women's priorities were to lie in bringing up children and in household work. This revitalising of industry and infrastructure came at the expense of the overall standard of living, at least for those not affected by the chronic unemployment of the later Weimar Republic, since wages were slightly reduced in pre-World War II years, despite a 25% increase in the cost of living (Shirer 1959).

Hitler's government sponsored architecture on an immense scale, with Albert Speer becoming famous as the first architect of the Reich. While important as an Architect in implementing Hitler's classicist reinterpretation of German culture, Speer would prove much more effective as armaments minister during the last years of World War II. In 1936, Berlin hosted the summer Olympic games, which were opened by Hitler and choreographed to demonstrate Aryan superiority over all other races, achieved mixed results. *Olympia*, the movie about the games and documentary propaganda films for the German Nazi Party were directed by Hitler's personal filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl.

Although Hitler made plans for a *Breitspurbahn* (broad gauge railroad network), they were pre-empted by World War II. Had the railroad been built, its gauge would have been three metres, even wider than the old Great Western Railway of Britain.

Hitler contributed to the design of the car that later became the Volkswagen Beetle, and charged Ferdinand Porsche with its construction. Production was also deferred due the war.

Rearmament and new alliances

In March 1935, Hitler violated the Treaty of Versailles by reintroducing conscription in Germany, building a massive military machine, including a new Navy (*Kriegsmarine*) and an Air Force (*Luftwaffe*). The enlistment of vast numbers of men and women in the new military seemed to solve unemployment problems, but seriously distorted the economy. For the first time in 20 years, Germany's armed forces were as strong as France's.

In March 1936, Hitler again violated the Treaty by reoccupying the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland. When Britain and France did nothing, he grew bolder. In July 1936, the Spanish Civil War began when the military, led by General Francisco Franco, rebelled against the elected Popular Front government. Hitler sent troops to support Franco and Spain served as a testing ground for Germany's new forces and their methods, including the bombing of undefended towns such as Gernika in April 1937, prompting Pablo Picasso's famous eponymous Guernica painting.

An Axis was declared between Germany and Italy by Galeazzo Ciano, foreign minister of Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini on October 25, 1936. Tripartite Treaty was then signed by Saburo Kuruu of Imperial Japan, Adolf Hitler of Nazi Germany and Galeazzo Ciano of Fascist Italy in September 27, 1940 and was later expanded to include Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. They were collectively known as the Axis Powers. Then on November 5, 1937, at the Reich Chancellory, Adolf Hitler held a secret meeting and stated his plans for acquiring "living space" (Lebensraum) for the German people.

The Holocaust

One of the foundations of Hitler's and the NSDAP's social policies was the concept of racial hygiene. This was applied with varying degrees of rigourousness to different groups of society, but constituted in essence the same application of the brutal and crude concept of social Darwinism to all the different kinds of victims. Between 1939 and 1945, the SS, assisted by collaborationist governments and recruits from occupied countries, systematically killed about 11 million people, including about 6 million Jews, in concentration camps, ghettos and mass executions, or through less systematic methods elsewhere. Besides being gassed to death, many also died of starvation and disease while working as slave labourers (sometimes benefiting private German companies in the process, because of the low cost of such labour). Along with Jews, non-Jewish Poles (over 3 million of whom died), alleged communists or political opposition, members of resistance groups, resisting Roman Catholics and

Protestants, homosexuals, Roma, the physically handicapped and mentally retarded, Soviet prisoners of war, Jehovah's Witnesses, anti-Nazi clergy, trade unionists, and psychiatric patients were killed. This industrial-scale genocide in Europe is referred to as the Holocaust (the term is also used by some authors in a narrower sense, to refer specifically to the unprecedented destruction of European Jewry). One of the biggest and most important concentration camps is Auschwitz.

The massacres that led to the coining of the word "genocide" (the *Endlösung der jüdischen Frage* or "Final Solution of the Jewish Question") were planned and ordered by leading Nazis, with Himmler playing a key role. While no specific order from Hitler authorizing the mass killing of the Jews has surfaced, there is documentation showing that he approved the *Einsatzgruppen* and the evidence also suggests that in the fall of 1941 Himmler and Hitler agreed in principle on mass extermination by gassing. During interrogations by Soviet intelligence officers declassified over fifty years later, Hitler's valet Heinz Linge and his military aide Otto Günsche said Hitler had "pored over the first blueprints of gas chambers."

To make for smoother cooperation in the implementation of this "Final Solution", the Wannsee conference was held near Berlin on January 20, 1942, with fifteen senior officials participating, led by Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann. The records of this meeting provide the clearest evidence of planning for the Holocaust. On February 22, Hitler was recorded saying to his associates, "we shall regain our health only by eliminating the Jews".

World War II

Opening moves

On March 12, 1938, Hitler pressured his native Austria into unification with Germany (the Anschluss) and made a triumphal entry into Vienna. Next, he intensified a crisis over the German-speaking Sudetenland districts of Czechoslovakia. This led to the Munich Agreement of September 1938, which authorized the annexation and immediate military occupation of these districts by Germany. As a result of the summit, Hitler was *TIME* magazine's Man of the Year for 1938. British prime minister Neville Chamberlain hailed this agreement as "Peace in our time", but by giving way to Hitler's military demands Britain and France also left Czechoslovakia to Hitler's mercy.

Hitler ordered Germany's army to enter Prague on March 10, 1939 and from Prague Castle proclaimed Bohemia and Moravia a German protectorate. After that, Hitler was claiming territories ceded to Poland under the Versailles Treaty. Britain had not been able to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union for an alliance against Germany, and, on August 23, 1939, Hitler concluded a secret non-aggression pact (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) with Stalin on which it was likely agreed that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany would partition Poland. On September 1, Germany invaded the western portion of Poland. Britain and France, who had guaranteed assistance to Poland, declared war on Germany. Not long after this, on September 17, Soviet forces invaded eastern Poland.

After capturing western Poland by the end of September, Hitler built up his forces much further during the so-called *Phony War*. In April 1940, he ordered German forces to march into Denmark and Norway. In May 1940, Hitler ordered his forces to attack France, conquering the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium in the process. France surrendered on June 22, 1940. This series of victories convinced his main ally, Benito Mussolini of Italy, to join the war on Hitler's side in May 1940.

Britain, whose defeated forces had evacuated France from the coastal town of Dunkirk, continued to fight alongside Canadian forces in the Battle of the Atlantic. After having his overtures for peace systematically rejected by the defiant British Government, now led by Winston Churchill, Hitler ordered bombing raids on the British Isles, leading to the Battle of Britain, a prelude of the planned German invasion. The attacks began by pounding the RAF airbases and the radar stations protecting South-East England. However, the Luftwaffe failed to defeat the RAF by the end of October 1940. Air superiority for the invasion, code-named Operation Sealion, could not be assured and Hitler ordered bombing raids to be carried out on British cities, including London and Coventry, mostly at night.

Path to defeat

On June 22, 1941, Hitler gave the signal for three million German troops to attack the Soviet Union, breaking the non-aggression pact he had concluded with Stalin less than two years earlier. This invasion, code-named Operation Barbarossa, seized huge amounts of territory, including the Baltic states, Belarus, and Ukraine, along with the encirclement and destruction of many Soviet forces. German forces, however, were stopped short of Moscow in December 1941 by the Russian winter and fierce Soviet resistance (see Battle of Moscow), and the invasion failed to achieve the quick triumph over the Soviet Union which Hitler had anticipated.

Hitler's declaration of war against the United States on December 11, 1941 four days after the Empire of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, USA set him against a coalition that included the world's largest empire (the British Empire), the world's greatest industrial and financial power (the USA), and the world's largest army (the Soviet Union).

In May 1942, Reinhard Heydrich, one of the highest SS officers and one of Hitler's favorite subordinates, was assassinated by British-trained Czech operatives in Prague. Hitler reacted by ordering brutal reprisals, including the massacre of Lidice.

In late 1942, German forces under Feldmarschall Erwin Rommel were defeated in the second battle of El Alamein, thwarting Hitler's plans to seize the Suez Canal and the Middle East. In February 1943, the lengthy Battle of Stalingrad ended with the complete encirclement and destruction of the German 6th Army. Both defeats were turning points in the war, although the latter is more commonly considered primary. From this point on, the quality of Hitler's military judgment became increasingly erratic and Germany's military and economic position deteriorated. Hitler's health was deteriorating too. His left hand started shaking uncontrollably. The biographer Ian Kershaw believes he suffered from Parkinson's disease. Other conditions that are suspected by some to have caused some (at least) of his symptoms are methamphetamine addiction and syphilis.

Italians overthrew Hitler's ally, Benito Mussolini, in 1943 after Operation Husky, an American and British invasion of Sicily. Throughout 1943 and 1944, the Soviet Union steadily forced Hitler's armies into retreat along the eastern front. On June 6, 1944, the Western allied armies landed in northern France in what was the largest amphibious operation ever conducted, Operation Overlord. Realists in the German army knew defeat was inevitable and some officers plotted to remove Hitler from power. In July 1944 one of them, Claus von Stauffenberg, planted a bomb at Hitler's military headquarters in Rastenburg (the so-called July 20 Plot), but Hitler narrowly escaped death. He ordered savage reprisals, resulting in the executions of more than 4,900 people (sometimes by starvation in solitary confinement followed by slow strangulation). The main

resistance movement was destroyed although smaller isolated groups such as Die Rote Kapelle continued to operate.

Defeat and death



that of Eva Braun (his long-term mistress whom he had married the day before) were put in a bomb crater, partially burned with gasoline by Führerbunker aides and hastily buried in the Chancellory garden as Russian shells poured down and Red Army infantry continued to advance only two or three hundred metres away. He also had his dog Blondi poisoned around the same time.

When Russian forces reached the Chancellory, they found his body and an autopsy was performed using dental records (and German dental assistants who were familiar with them) to confirm the identification. To avoid any possibility of creating a potential shrine, the remains of Hitler and Braun were repeatedly moved, then secretly buried by SMERSH at their new headquarters in Magdeburg. In April 1970, when the facility was about to be turned over to the East German government, the remains were reportedly exhumed, thoroughly cremated, and the ashes finally dumped unceremoniously into the Elbe. According to the Russian Federal Security Service, a fragment of human skull stored in its archives and displayed to the public in a 2000 exhibition came from the remains of Hitler's body uncovered by the Red Army in Berlin, and is all that remains of Hitler; however, the authenticity of the skull has been challenged by many historians and researchers.

At the time of Hitler's death, most of Germany's infrastructure and major cities were in ruins and he had left explicit orders to complete the destruction. Millions of Germans were dead with millions more wounded or homeless. In his will, he dismissed other Nazi leaders and appointed Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz as *Reichspräsident* (President of Germany) and Goebbels as *Reichskanzler* (Chancellor of Germany). However, Goebbels and his wife Magda committed suicide on 1 May 1945. On 7 May 1945, in Rheims, France, the German armed forces surrendered unconditionally to the Western Allies and on 8 May 1945, in Berlin to the Soviet Union thus ending the war in Europe and with the creation of the Allied Control Council on 5 June 1945, the Four Powers assumed "supreme authority with respect to Germany." Adolf Hitler's proclaimed *Thousand Year Reich* had lasted 12 years.

Legacy

Since the defeat of Germany in World War II, Hitler, the Nazi Party and the results of Nazism have been regarded in most of the world as synonymous with evil. Historical and cultural portrayals of Hitler in the west are, by virtually universal consensus, condemnatory.

The copyright of Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* in Europe is claimed by the Free State of Bavaria and will expire in 2015. Reproductions in Germany are generally authorized only for scholarly purposes and in heavily commented form. The situation is however unclear; Werner Maser (whom Theodor Heuss proposed to publish "Mein Kampf" as a weapon against Nazi Ideology) comments that intellectual property cannot be confiscated and so, it still would lie in the hands of Hitler's nephew, who, however, does not want to have anything to do with Hitler's legacy. This situation leads to contested trials, eg., in Poland and Sweden. "Mein Kampf" is still published in the USA, as well as in other countries such as Turkey or Israel, by publishers with various political positions.

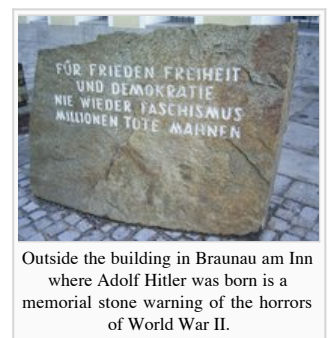
The display of swastikas or other Nazi symbols is prohibited in Germany and political extremists are generally under surveillance by the Verfassungsschutz, one of the federal or state-based offices for the protection of the constitution.

There have been instances of public figures referring to Hitler's legacy in neutral or favourable terms, particularly in South America, the Islamic World and parts of Asia. Future Egyptian President Anwar Sadat wrote favourably of Hitler in 1953. Bal Thackeray, leader of the right-wing Shiv Sena party in the Indian state of the Maharashtra, declared in 1995 that he was an admirer of Hitler. Much of the positive or neutral attitude towards Hitler may partly be because many of these countries were colonies of Allied Powers who were fighting Hitler-led Germany.

Hitler's religious beliefs

Adolf Hitler was brought up in his family's religion by his Roman Catholic parents, but as a school boy he began to reject the Church and Catholicism. After he had left home, he never attended Mass or received the Sacraments.

In later life, Hitler's religious beliefs present a discrepant picture: In public statements, he frequently spoke positively about the Christian heritage



of German culture and belief in Christ. Hitler's private statements, reported by his intimates, are more mixed, showing Hitler as a religious but also anti-Christian man. However, in contrast to other Nazi leaders, Hitler did not adhere to esoteric ideas, occultism, or neo-paganism, and ridiculed such beliefs in his book *Mein Kampf*. Rather, Hitler advocated a "Positive Christianity", a belief system purged from what he objected to in traditional Christianity, and reinvented Jesus as a fighter against the Jews.

Hitler believed in a Social Darwinist struggle for survival between the different races, among which the "Aryan race" was supposed to be the torchbearers of civilization and the Jews as enemies of all civilization. Whether his anti-semitism was influenced by older Christian ideas remains disputed. Hitler also strongly believed that "Providence" was guiding him in this fight.

Among Christian denominations, Hitler favoured Protestantism, which was more open to such reinterpretations, but at the same time imitated some elements of Catholic church organization, liturgy and phraseology in his politics.

Health and sexuality

Hitler's alleged health problems in his later years have long been the subject of debate, and he has variously been suggested to have suffered from irritable bowel syndrome, skin lesions, irregular heartbeat, tremors on the left side of his body, syphilis, Parkinson's disease and a strongly suggested addiction to methamphetamine.

Most of Hitler's biographers have characterized him as a vegetarian who abstained from eating meat, beginning in the early 1930s until his death (although his actual dietary habits appear inconsistent and are sometimes hotly disputed). There are reports of him disgusting his guests by giving them graphic accounts of the slaughter of animals in an effort to make them shun meat. A fear of cancer (which his mother died from) is the most widely cited reason, though many authors also assert Hitler had a profound and deep love of animals. He did consume dairy products and eggs, however. Martin Bormann constructed a large greenhouse close to the Berghof (near Berchtesgaden) in order to ensure a steady supply of fresh fruits and vegetables for Hitler throughout the war. Personal photographs of Bormann's children tending the greenhouse survive and, by 2005, its foundations were among the only ruins visible in the area which were directly associated with Nazi leaders. For more information on this topic, see Vegetarianism of Adolf Hitler.

Hitler was also a fervent non-smoker and promoted aggressive anti-smoking campaigns throughout Germany. He reportedly promised a gold watch to any of his close associates who quit (and actually gave a few away). Several witness accounts relate that, immediately after his suicide was confirmed, many officers, aides, and secretaries in the Führerbunker lit cigarettes.

Contrary to popular accounts, there seems to be some evidence Hitler did not abstain entirely from alcohol. After the war, an interrogation in the USSR of his valet Heinz Linge could indicate that Hitler drank champagne now and then with Eva Braun.

Sexuality

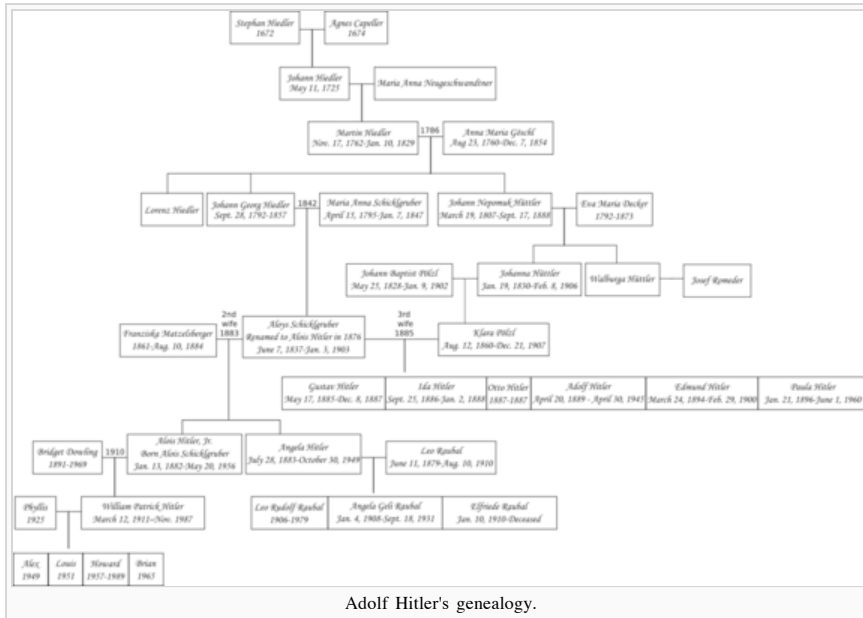
Hitler presented himself to his public as a man without an intimate domestic life, dedicated to his political "mission". He is known to have had a fiancée, Mimi Reiter in the 1920s, and to have later had a mistress, Eva Braun. He had a close bond with his niece Geli Raubal, which many commentators have claimed was sexual. All three women attempted suicide during their relationship with him, a fact which has led to speculation that Hitler may have had unusual sexual fetishes, though Reiter, the only one to survive the Nazi regime, denies this. During the war and afterwards psychoanalysts offered numerous inconsistent psycho-sexual explanations of his pathology. More recently Lothar Machtan has argued in his book *The Hidden Hitler* that Hitler was homosexual.

Hitler's family

Paula Hitler, the last living member of Adolf Hitler's immediate family, died in 1960.

The most prominent, and longest-living direct descendants of Adolf Hitler's father, Alois, was Adolf's nephew William Patrick Hitler. With his wife Phyllis, he eventually moved to Long Island, New York and had four sons. None of William Hitler's children have yet had any children of their own.

Over the years various investigative reporters have attempted to track down other distant relatives of the Führer; many are now alleged to be living inconspicuous lives and have long since changed their last name.



Adolf Hitler's genealogy.

- Eva Braun, mistress and then wife
- Alois Hitler, father
- Klara Hitler, mother
- Paula Hitler, sister
- Alois Hitler, Jr., half-brother
- Bridget Dowling, sister-in-law
- William Patrick Hitler, nephew
- Heinz Hitler, nephew
- Angela Hitler Raubal, half-sister
- Maria Schickelgruber, grandmother
- Johann Georg Hiedler, presumed grandfather
- Johann Nepomuk Hiedler, maternal great-grandfather, presumed great uncle and possibly Hitler's true paternal grandfather
- Geli Raubal, niece and rumoured mistress
- Aloisia Veit, mentally insane cousin.



Sketch of Eva Braun by Hitler.

People associated with Hitler

- Martin Bormann, Adolf Hitler's secretary.
- Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, sister of philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and Hitler supporter.
- Hans Frank, Hitler's lawyer and later senior Nazi official in occupied Poland.
- Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda.
- Hermann Göring, Reichsmarschall, Commander of the Luftwaffe, founder of the Gestapo.
- Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy as party leader, best known for his flight to Scotland to negotiate peace in 1941.
- Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Reich Main Security Office (including the Gestapo)
- Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS, key figure in the Holocaust and the "Final Solution".
- Heinrich Hoffmann, official photographer from 1920 to 1945.
- Alfred Jodl, military officer, knew Hitler since 1923.
- Wilhelm Keitel, military Field Marshal during World War II.
- August Kubizek, close friend and roommate in Vienna
- Leopold Poetsch, Hitler's anti-Semitic school teacher
- Leni Riefenstahl, friend and filmmaker who documented the Nazi party.
- Erwin Rommel, the famous "Desert Fox", a highly skilled Field Marshal during World War II who was forced to commit suicide after being implicated in a plot against Hitler.
- Ernst Röhm, leader of the SA and internal critic, killed in the Night of the Long Knives (1934).
- Albert Speer, Hitler's personal architect, Minister of armaments. Close friend to Hitler.
- Paul Troost, famous architect who served before Speer.
- Winifred Wagner, head of the Wagner family and close friend of Hitler's.

Miscellany

- A nickname for Hitler used by German soldiers was *Gröfaz*, a derogatory and/or sarcastic abbreviation for *Größter Feldherr aller Zeiten* ("Greatest War Lord of all Time"), a title initially publicized by Nazi propaganda after the surprisingly quick fall of France. Nicknames by others were more disparaging. General George S. Patton referred to Hitler as "that paper-hanging son of a bitch!", after Hitler's habit of going over wall maps with his staff. Some within his staff called him "carpet eater", after seeing him fly into a rage so intense that it left him on the floor gripping the carpet with his teeth and fists.
- Hitler did not like women to wear cosmetics, since they contained animal by-products, and frequently teased his mistress Eva Braun about her habit of wearing makeup.
- He almost never wore a uniform to social engagements, which he attended frequently whenever in Berlin during the 1930s. When he did wear uniforms, they were tailored and understated compared to those of other prominent Nazis who often wore elaborate uniforms with extensive decorations and medals.
- According to the 2001 documentary *The Tramp and the Dictator*, the Charlie Chaplin parody/satire *The Great Dictator* was not only sent to Hitler, but an eyewitness confirmed he did see it, twice. Chaplin has been quoted as saying, "I'd have given anything to know what he

thought of it."

- Hitler's favourite film is variously credited as being *King Kong* (1933) or *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* (1935) and his favourite opera was Richard Wagner's *Rienzi*, of which he claimed to have seen over 40 performances.

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